

IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION No 15741 of 2003

For Approval and Signature:

HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

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1. Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed : NO
to see the judgements?
 2. To be referred to the Reporter or not? : NO
 3. Whether Their Lordships wish to see the fair copy : NO
of the judgement?
 4. Whether this case involves a substantial question : NO
of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution
of India, 1950 of any Order made thereunder?
 5. Whether it is to be circulated to the concerned : NO
Magistrate/Magistrates, Judge/Judges, Tribunal/Tribunals?

BHAVAN ALIAS BHAVAN DADHI MATHURBHAI HADIYA

Versus

POLICE COMMISSIONER SURAT

Appearance:

1. Special Civil Application No. 15741 of 2003
MS BANNA S DUTTA for Petitioner No. 1
Mr. SS Patel, AGP for Respondent No. 1-3

CORAM : HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE A.L.DAVE

Date of decision: 04/12/2003

ORAL JUDGEMENT

1. Commissioner of Police, Surat City, Surat, passed an order on 22nd September, 2003 in exercise of powers under Section 3(1) of the Gujarat Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act, 1985 ("PASA Act" for short), detaining the petitioner under the provisions of the said Act.

2. The detaining authority took into consideration two offences registered against the detenue punishable under Section 392 and 114 of I.P.C., so also the statements of two anonymous witnesses dated 30th August and 31st August 2003. The statements were verified on 18th September 2003. The detaining authority considered the activities of the detenu as that of a dangerous person as defined under the PASA Act and observed that the petitioner is required to be immediately prevented from pursuing his activities, which are detrimental to public order. The authority also considered the possibility of resorting to less drastic remedies and came to conclusion that detention under PASA Act is the only remedy that can be resorted to.

3. Since the offences relate to Section 392 of I.P.C., a close scrutiny of the papers relating to the offences was made. The investigation papers relate to the registered offences do not indicate any disturbance to public order. All that is indicated is that the witnesses are threatened. They did not lodge the complaint for a long time and therefore the detenue would be tried for the offence in light of that aspect. The fact remains that there is nothing to indicate any disturbance to the public order so far as the registered offences are concerned.

4. The petitioner challenges the order of detention on various grounds. Learned advocate appearing for the petitioner, has restricted his arguments to the ground that there is improper exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act. He submitted that the authority has not undertaken the exercise of verifying the correctness and genuineness of the fear expressed by the witnesses qua the detenu. He submitted further that the grounds of detention do not indicate any satisfaction recorded by the detaining authority to indicate that the activities of the detenu are detrimental to public health and, therefore, there is improper exercise of powers under Section 3 of the PASA Act. He further submitted that, so far as the offences are concerned, they relate to theft cases and there is no disturbance to public order. He submitted that the petition may, therefore, be allowed.

5. Mr. Patel, learned Assistant Government Pleader, has opposed this petition.

6. Considering the rival side contentions, it may be noted that the detaining authority has observed that the fear expressed by the witnesses and the statements and

the statements are correct and genuine. Barring this statement in the grounds of detention, there appears nothing to indicate an exercise having been undertaken by the detaining authority for verifying correctness and genuineness of the statements and the fear expressed by the witnesses. The detaining authority has to take into consideration the background, the antecedents, the character, etc. of the detenu while considering the need for exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act. The authority has to scale the right of the detenu of making an effective representation on the one hand and the public interest on the other and has to strike a balance between the two. The detaining authority has not filed any affidavit nor is there any contemporaneous material to indicate undertaking of such exercise by the detaining authority and, therefore, the exercise of powers under Section 9(2) of the PASA Act can be taken to have vitiated. No reliance, therefore, can be placed on these statements for sustaining the order of detention. There is improper exercise of powers under Section 9(2), as there is no material to indicate the exercise as stated above (Kajalben G. Sindhi v. Commissioner of Police, 2000(1) GLH 320 and Kishore Naginbhai Parmar v. State of Gujarat & Ors., 2000(4) GLR 3236).

7. The satisfaction regarding disturbance to public order also does not seem to be well founded. The registered cases are all theft cases and they do not indicate anything to support disturbance to public order. The subjective satisfaction arrived at by the detaining authority cannot be said to be legal, valid and in accordance with law on aspect of disturbance to public order as distinct from law and order. The petition, therefore, deserves to be allowed.

8. In the result, the petition is allowed. The impugned order of detention dated the 22nd September, 2003, passed against the detenu, is hereby quashed. The detenu is ordered to be set at liberty forthwith, if not required in any other matter. Rule is made absolute with no orders as to costs.

8. Direct service is permitted.

[A.L. DAVE, J.]

rmr.